

THE REMINISCENCES OF CARL
SCHURZ

motives of the manager of the convention were
concerned; but
as to the probable consequences of their policy it
was but too
well founded.

If the members of the National Union
Convention
thought that their conciliatory utterances would
pour oil on the
angry waves of the campaign, they reckoned
without their
host. When a committee appointed for that
purpose presented
to President Johnson a copy of its proceedings,
there was
rather a note of defiance to his opponents, than of
conciliation,
in his response. " We have witnessed in one
department of the
government every endeavor to prevent the
restoration of peace,
harmony and union," he said. " We have seen
hanging upon
the verge of the government, as it were, a
body called, or
which assumes to be, the Congress of the United
States, while,
in fact, it is a Congress of only a part of the
United States,
We" have seen a Congress in a minority assume
to exercise
power which, allowed to be consummated,
would result in
despotism or monarchy itself/* Here was again
the thinly
veiled threat that, because certain States were
not represented
in it, the validity of the acts of Congress might
be attacked.
But worse was to follow. It is a well-known fact
that Presi-
dents, under the influence of the Washington
atmosphere, are
apt to become victims of the delusion that they
are idolized by
the American people. Even John Tyler is said to
have thought

so. It may have been under a similar impression
that President
Johnson, who had great confidence in the power
of his influ-
ence over the masses when he personally
confronted them, ac-
cepted an invitation requesting his presence at
the unveiling
of a Douglas statue in Chicago, and he made this
an occasion
for a " presidential progress" through some of
the States.
He started late in August. Several members of
his cabinet,
Seward among others, accompanied him, and so
did General